

Amendments to the Claims

This "Listing of Claims" replaces all prior versions of claims in the subject application:

32. (Currently Amended) A process for the recovery of an organic acid ester from a fermentation broth comprising:

- (a) conducting a fermentation to produce a fermentation broth, wherein the fermentation broth comprises an organic acid and microbial biomass;
- (ab) drying said fermentation broth to obtain a an organic acid-containing dried product, wherein said drying occurs without prior removal of insolubles said microbial biomass from said organic acid-containing fermentation broth;
- (bc) adding said organic acid-containing dried product of step (ab) to a lower alcohol in the presence of an acid to obtain a free organic acid,
- (ed) esterifying the free organic acid to the corresponding ester; and
- (de) removing insolubles to obtain a solution comprising an organic acid ester, wherein the insolubles include the microbial biomass.

33-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein at in step (bc) the concentration of said organic acid added to said lower alcohol is from about 50 g/L to about 100 g/L.

37. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein in step (ab) drying comprises spray drying said fermentation broth.

38. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein the reaction temperature at in steps (bc) and (ed) is from about 25° C to about 60° C.

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39. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein at in step (bc) said lower alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, butanol and glycol.

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40. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein at in step (bc) about 1.2 equivalents of acid is added.

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41. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein at in step (bc) said acid is selected from the group consisting of sulphuric acid, hydrobromic acid, hydrochloric acid and phosphoric acid.

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42. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 41, wherein at in step (bc) said acid is sulphuric acid.

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43. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 32, wherein at in step (de) the process for removing insolubles comprises filtration.

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44. (Original) The process of claim 32, wherein said organic acid comprises lactic acid, 2-keto-L-gulonic acid, citric acid or gluconic acid.

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45. (Original) The process of claim 44, wherein said organic acid is 2-keto-L-gulonic acid.